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## Motivando el conocimiento: Expanding Research in Latin American and Latina/o Studies

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# Motivando el conocimiento: Expanding Research in Latin American and Latina/o Studies

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Over the past year, we have enjoyed exploring a new area of the broader academic world of Latina/o Studies, a proposal brought to us by Dr. Peter J. Casarella, in the theme of “Latina/o Catholicism Today.” This intriguing topic elicited an array of scholarship and creative production, filling the pages of two issues of *Diálogo*, volume 16. Our understanding of this significant sub-field, identification of various books and articles published, and specialists at several universities, has been greatly enriched by the submissions received, commentary from expert peer reviewers, and conversations with Dr. Casarella.

We wish for the reader a similar enriching experience, reading and studying the articles brought forth in this volume. The present issue includes new research on Catholic-Latino community impact, and a special tribute to an influential Latino thinker. Earlier this year, *Diálogo* 16:1 featured a variety of interdisciplinary work and creative pieces related to tradition and history. Upon staffing a table at the Hispanic Literatures Symposium at CSU-Dominguez Hills in early spring, we were impressed with the interest and reaction to our theme by conference attendees, who gravitated to the issue, hot off the press.

*Diálogo* 16:2 highlights an extensive article by Brazilian scholar Maria Clara Bingemer, on the continued evolution of the Liberation Theology movement in Latin America, articles on a concept of *spiritual mestizaje* developed by Ohio State University professor Theresa Delgadillo, and the practice of *Cursillo* in the Midwest, by doctoral candidate Adrian Bautista, followed by a special section of reflections in tribute to the prominent and influential Cuban-American philosopher and theologian, Alejandro García-Rivera.

Following collaborative reflection and dialogue, Peter J. Casarella invited participants in a conference he hosted at DePaul University in 2011, titled, “Cosmic Liturgy: The Vision of Alejandro García-Rivera,” to contribute short essays. The rich response helped shape an excellent retrospective on this influential thinker, in witness, or testimony, of his impact on their lives and work. The eight writers represent a broad range of ages and regions of the

U.S. We recommend reading the accounts in sequence for revelations of the intricate connections of life, culture, research and observation, meditation and spirituality. Please enjoy this tribute on the caring manner, deep thought, and legacy of a remarkable human being.

Alejandro García-Rivera came to live in the U.S. at age eight. He grew up in the Midwest, Ohio and Kentucky, and studied biophysics, completing his M.S. at Ohio State University. The defining moment of his life occurred in Seattle, where he was employed as a physicist at Boeing, and was assigned to the Air Launch Cruise Missile project. After years in that area of work, he came suddenly to the realization that the nature of this work was designed only to kill. This awakening led him to leave and study at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, with subsequent ordination to the ministry in the Lutheran Church. Before his return to the Catholic Church—which would launch his leadership in Latina/o Catholic Theology in the U.S.—he led a very poor Puerto Rican community of faith in Allentown, PA, as their pastor and voice against racism. For many years before his untimely death from cancer, he was a faculty member of the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley (today Santa Clara University). From California, he emerged as a preeminent Latino theologian, publishing numerous books, and directing more dissertations by Latina/o theologians than any other scholar at a Catholic University.

The present issue also includes two major interviews conducted by Peter J. Casarella, with experts on topical issues for everyday life: considerations of food, companionship, and the Eucharist; then Mexican-Catholic history, in conversation with a historian about a recent film on the “Christers” revolt in Mexico. Our creative contribution varies from issue to issue; here a lovely contemplation in Spanish on one’s childhood in Mexico City, the memories and impressions of landmarks sensed and viewed before and after wearing glasses.

In each issue, we are pleased to present another artist’s images on Latina/o life, here by the Camaldolese monk, priest and artist, Arthur Poulin, whose artistic revelations celebrate harmony in nature and creation,

with landscapes of expressive qualities moving from darkness to light, and in contemplation of nature and existence—fitting qualities for the special tribute herein.

Our *Reviews* section continues to grow, with a variety of books reviewed here, as well as the film, *For Greater Glory*. We invite your own evaluations of books and films on Latin American and Latina/o topics, indicating how they can be applied to the process of teaching and learning. We also welcome proposals for new themes, submissions of scholarship and research briefs (with references in endnotes) in the field of Latin American/Latino Studies, creative work, and interviews with significant personages.

New themes for *Diálogo*, which are regularly in flux, are enriched by the research articles and creative work received from collaborators. For next year, please heed our call for creative work or scholarship on the state of Latin American and Latina/o Poetry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. With this issue, we launch a call for articles on two new themes, the *Mestizaje* of Food, and the contemporary resurgence of Indigenous (Indo-American) Literatures, to be published in *Diálogo* 18.

As we look forward to the emergence of new voices, trends and research, we appeal especially to writers and academics in Latin American and Caribbean nations, for articles in Spanish or English, as well as submissions of poetry and short essays in indigenous (First World) languages, with translation or versions in Spanish or English.

Warm wishes to all from our DePaul University offices in Chicago!

## AL LECTOR/LECTORA DE HABLA HISPANA

Las metas de la revista interdisciplinaria, *Diálogo*, son de animar el interés y las colaboraciones de escritores académicos y creativos, de naciones de habla hispana del hemisferio americano, para unir ideas de *comunidad* y estudio académico, en torno a las dimensiones, producciones, y preocupaciones de todo pueblo americano contemporáneo.

Invitamos encarecidamente al lector, escritor y/o escritora de habla hispana a compartir con nosotros sus estudios e investigaciones, sus obras creativas, propuestas de entrevistas, y reseñas de libros y cine. Los propósitos de esta revista académica son de publicar tanto en inglés como español y lenguas autóctonas (en resurgimiento) del continente americano, como se puede ver en algunos ejemplos anteriores. Los temas de números futuros incluyen el estado de la Poesía en el siglo XXI, y a más largo plazo, la cocina mestiza de América Latina, y el resurgimiento de obras indígenas latinoamericanas.

Nos interesan estudios e investigaciones académicas, de diversos campos y de naturaleza interdisciplinaria, conectados al ambiente y las poblaciones latinoamericanas/caribeñas. Por favor, pónganse en contacto con la Editora y sub-Editora de la revista, y con gusto les contestaremos en inglés o español. Invitamos además a personas expertas quienes deseen ayudar en el arbitraje de los artículos a ponerse en contacto, y también a los que desean formar parte del comité de consulta editorial. ¡Hacia adelante en solidaridad y temas interdisciplinarios!

*Saludos desde Chicago!*